

## IDAHO EMPLOYMENT

Idaho Department of Labor



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## State Overview

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE UNCHANGED IN DECEMBER 2000**

The state seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, at 4.9 percent, was unchanged from November to December 2000. However, compared to a year ago, it increased by half a percentage point. This change occurred in spite of an increase in the number employed. In December 2000, there were 13.1 percent more unemployed persons than in December 1999, and the *Civilian Labor Force* only increased by 1.7 percent.

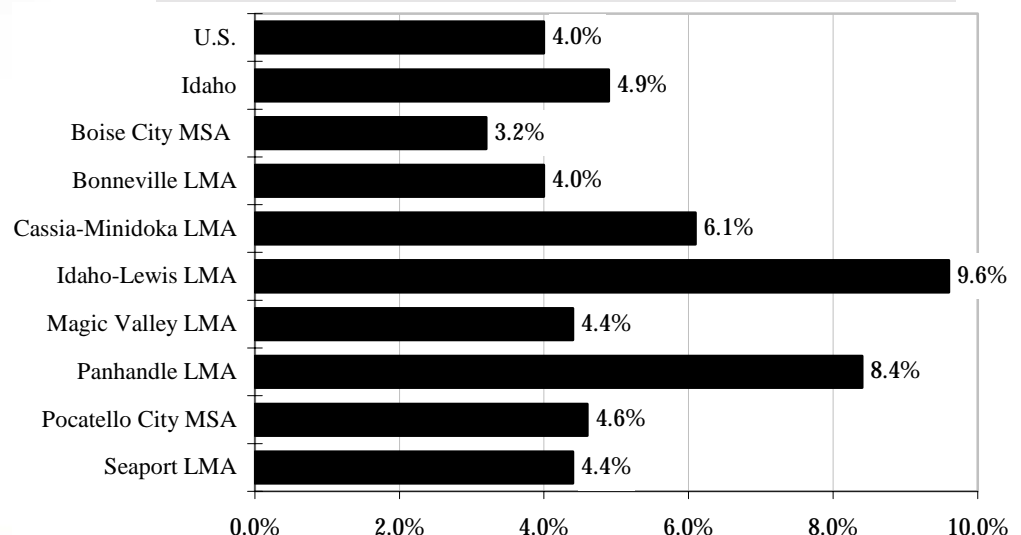
From November 2000, there was a decline of 3,500 people in the *Civilian Labor Force* and this is the same number estimated for the decline in total employment. The broad job sectors that contributed the most to the monthly employment decline were *Agriculture, Construction, Lumber and Wood Products, Motor Freight Transportation, and Government*. Also, seasonal hiring in *Retail Trade* and the outdoor recreation sectors did not meet what is normally expected. On a seasonally adjusted basis, total employment has declined each month starting with August 2000.

Labor force details for the state, labor market areas, counties, and cities can be found in State Table 1 on page 3. Final year-end and annual average labor force and industry employment data will be published in the next newsletter.

**AREA LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS**

Each month, labor force statistics are calculated for eight multi-county Labor Market Areas (LMA). These are listed in State Table 1. The Idaho-Lewis LMA once again had the highest unemployment rate at 9.6 percent. This LMA does not include very many people but it consistently has had the highest unemployment rate in recent years. The area with the most population—the Boise MSA—had 3.2 percent unemployment, which was considerably below the statewide average.

Figure 1: Unemployment rates of U.S., Idaho, and Idaho's LMA's.



## COUNTY LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

Five Idaho counties had double-digit unemployment rates in December:

- Clearwater County at 18.2 percent
- Adams County at 13.0 percent
- Idaho County at 10.6 percent
- Shoshone County at 10.3 percent
- Lemhi County at 10.0 percent

Clearwater, Adams and Idaho counties rely heavily on logging and wood products manufacturing. Shoshone and Lemhi counties also count on wood products, but mining is also significant to their economies. While seasonality plays some role in these counties' unemployment patterns, economic downturns in these natural resources industries is the main contributor to the high unemployment rates.

Nineteen of Idaho's 44 counties had unemployment rates below the statewide average of 4.9 percent. Of those, only two counties had unemployment rates below 3.0 percent:

- Madison County at 2.6 percent
- Ada County at 2.7 percent

### Agriculture

December is one of the low months for agricultural employment. Crops have been harvested and soil is frozen. The employment level, at 27,910, is 9.9 percent less than that for November 2000, but somewhat above December 1999 estimates. The employment remained unchanged for Christmas tree harvesting, fresh pack operations, livestock tending, and equipment maintenance. The primary month-to-month decrease was in the hired worker category.

Idaho's agricultural economic well-being was in the spotlight for a variety of reasons.

Low commodity prices continued in December, and the low snow pack combined with rising energy prices caused more concern. In addition, three southcentral Idaho counties had a moratorium on the expansion of dairy facilities because of environmental factors. All of these developments created more doubt about the strength of Idaho's agricultural economy, despite the effort of about 200 potato growers who have joined to divert some of their crop from the market place in order to shore up prices.

The U.S. stock of potatoes set a record. It was up 13 percent from 1999 and 4 percent from the previous record set in February 1997. Idaho's stock was up 13 percent from last year, Washington's up 34 percent, and Oregon's up 10 percent. The diversion group intends to donate the potatoes to charity, convert into animal feed, and use as a fertilizer.

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*Or to the Labor Market Analyst noted in each area news section.*

**DIRK KEMPTHORNE, GOVERNOR**

**Roger B. Madsen, Director**



### IDAHO'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

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Rising energy prices affect agricultural producers in several ways. The price of petroleum fuels is a production cost factor and in transporting harvested crops and livestock to processors, warehouses, and retail markets. Natural gas is used in fertilizer production. Electricity powers irrigation pumps. The main concern with electricity prices is that the below average snow pack and low reservoir levels will cause price increases this summer. Idaho Power, the major electric utility in Southern Idaho, has proposed a possible kilowatt-hour buy-back program in which growers who cut their electrical consumption could sell that power back to the utility. The utility has identified about 1,700 irrigation pumpers who use 100,000-kilowatt-hours or more during the irrigation season as the main participants in the buy-back program. This program still has to be approved by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. Presumably some power consumption conservation would lead to less acreage being planted or less water sensitive crops planted.

The University of Missouri's Food and Agricultural Policy Institute recently published its annual, congressionally funded U.S. Baseline Briefing Book. This publication presents historical data on the nation's agricultural system and makes some estimates of what could be expected in the coming year. This is available on the Internet at <http://www.fapri.missouri.edu>.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

There was a slight decline in the number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* from November to December 2000. There was positive growth, at 3.5 percent, from December 1999. The 1,300 new jobs in the *Service-Producing Industries* could not offset the loss of 2,200 jobs in the *Goods-Producing Industries* between November to December 2000.

Every major industrial sector in the *Goods-Producing Industries* reported a job loss between November and December 2000. However, the *Goods-Producing Industries* did add 1,100 jobs over December 1999. Job losses were concentrated in the *Lumber and Wood Products* industries and to a lesser degree in *Construction*. Most of the other *Manufacturing* industries showed little month-to-month changes.

## Construction

Cold weather conditions caused the loss of 1,700 jobs in *Construction* from November to De-

State Table 1: December 2000 Labor Force (preliminary)

Seasonally Adjusted	Labor Force	Unemp.	% Unemp.	Total Emp.
<b>Seaport LMA</b>	34,370	1,520	4.4	32,850
Nez Perce County	22,590	1,040	4.6	21,550
Asotin County, WA	11,780	480	4.1	11,300
<b>Boise City MSA</b>	239,620	7,620	3.2	232,000
Ada County	173,570	4,760	2.7	168,810
Canyon County	66,050	2,860	4.3	63,190
<b>Pocatello City MSA*</b>	41,320	1,900	4.6	39,420
<b>Bonneville LMA</b>	82,680	3,290	4.0	79,390
Bingham County	22,780	1,170	5.2	21,610
Bonneville County	47,890	1,580	3.3	46,310
Butte County	1,680	70	4.3	1,610
Jefferson County	10,310	460	4.5	9,850
<b>Cassia-Minidoka LMA</b>	20,460	1,250	6.1	19,210
Cassia County	10,150	590	5.8	9,560
Minidoka County	10,310	660	6.4	9,650
<b>Idaho-Lewis LMA</b>	7,810	750	9.6	7,060
Idaho County	6,270	660	10.6	5,610
Lewis County	1,545	85	5.5	1,460
<b>Panhandle LMA</b>	90,580	7,590	8.4	82,990
Benewah County	4,510	430	9.6	4,080
Bonner County	17,580	1,390	7.9	16,190
Boundary County	4,600	410	8.9	4,190
Kootenai County	57,010	4,660	8.2	52,350
Shoshone County	6,890	710	10.3	6,180
<b>Magic Valley LMA</b>	50,080	2,220	4.4	47,860
Gooding County	6,990	290	4.2	6,700
Jerome County	9,380	400	4.3	8,980
Twin Falls County	33,700	1,530	4.5	32,170
Adams County	1,610	210	13.0	1,400
Bear Lake County	2,970	180	6.1	2,790
Blaine County	11,740	390	3.4	11,350
Boise County	1,640	125	7.7	1,515
Camas County	465	25	5.3	440
Caribou County	3,200	230	7.2	2,970
Clark County	650	30	4.8	620
Clearwater County	4,330	790	18.2	3,540
Custer County	1,970	175	8.8	1,795
Elmore County	9,440	580	6.2	8,860
Franklin County	4,950	180	3.7	4,770
Fremont County	4,730	360	7.7	4,370
Gem County	6,130	320	5.2	5,810
Latah County	15,010	530	3.5	14,480
Lemhi County	3,620	360	10.0	3,260
Lincoln County	2,000	80	4.0	1,920
Madison County	11,770	310	2.6	11,460
Oneida County	1,765	65	3.8	1,700
Owyhee County	4,075	185	4.5	3,890
Payette County	10,600	890	8.4	9,710
Power County	3,700	270	7.2	3,430
Teton County	3,540	140	4.0	3,400
Valley County	4,050	340	8.3	3,710
Washington County	4,820	430	8.9	4,390
<b>State of Idaho</b>	<b>673,890</b>	<b>32,860</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>641,030</b>
<b>Idaho Cities</b>				
Boise	110,140	2,940	2.7	107,200
Coeur d'Alene	20,110	1,230	6.1	18,880
Idaho Falls	29,640	1,000	3.4	28,640
Lewiston	19,110	770	4.0	18,340
Nampa	20,210	920	4.6	19,290
Pocatello	29,690	1,310	4.4	28,380
Twin Falls	17,670	830	4.7	16,840

ember 2000. All industries in this group lost jobs, with *Specialty Trades* having the highest loss at 900. Over the year job growth was 2,400 for a strong 6.7 growth rate. It is thought that construction activity will slow in 2001 in correlation to an anticipated slower population growth, but lower interest rates might keep the industry at higher than expected levels. Overall, there should be continued employment growth in these industries.

### Manufacturing

Employment in *Manufacturing* industries declined by 400 jobs from November to December 2000, with 300 jobs lost in *Lumber and Wood Products*. Specifically, *Logging* had a loss of 200 jobs. While weather might account for some of these losses, the over the year 2,200-job loss tells the real story of the industry. Sawmills have closed or experienced extended lay-offs, and additional closures have been announced for 2001. Most Idaho sawmills are located in small rural communities, so these closures and cutbacks will have extended economic effects in these towns.

There was little change from November to December 2000 in Idaho's primary high-tech manufacturing industries of computers and components. Over the year, changes were positive with 1,100 new jobs added.

*Food Processing* jobs declined both between November and December 2000 and December 1999 and December 2000. The month over month job loss reflected a 300 job decrease in activity in the sugar processing sector. The sugarbeets have been harvested. The sugarbeets are processed into molasses awaiting orders for sugar. The period from October through February is commonly referred to as the sugar "campaign". Activity begins to slow in December as the harvest is completed. The molasses processing is generally completed in February. The year over year change in *Food Processing* reflects a loss of 500 jobs in *Canned, Frozen, & Preserved Fruits, Vegetables, & Food Specialties*. The tightening in the demand of processed potatoes has forced companies to trim their workforce and become more efficient in their processing. Most major processors have experienced a decrease in the number of available jobs.

Even though some of the other *Manufacturing* industries show a fairly large percentage loss in jobs since December 1999, the actual number of jobs lost is relatively small.

### SERVICES-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES

The *Services-Producing Industries* reported a gain of 1,300 more jobs in December bringing the number of workers to 453,600, up 0.3 percent from November and 4.2 percent (or 18,100 jobs) from December 1999. *Amusement & Recreation Services, Eating & Drinking Establishments, and General Merchandise Stores* accounting for most of the net increase with 700, 500, and 500 new jobs respectively. The holiday season increased activity in merchandise, clothing, and furniture stores along with gift shops. As winter recreational activities got into full swing employment increased at resorts, ski lifts, ice rinks, and related venues. The increased activity not only provided more job opportunities in *Amusement & Recreation Services* but also *Hotels & Other Lodging Places* within the *Services* industry. Additional recreational activity also contributed to more jobs in *Retail Trade* as food, clothing, equipment, and gifts were in demand by recreationists. From December 1999, growth rates were particularly high in *General Merchandise Stores* and *Business Services* with an increase of 2,500 and 4,000 new jobs respectively.

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State Table 2: Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

BY PLACE OF WORK	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs</b>	569,900	570,800	550,700	-0.2	3.5
<b>GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	116,300	118,500	115,200	-1.9	1.0
<b>Mining</b>	2,400	2,500	2,500	-4.0	-4.0
Metal Mining	1,300	1,300	1,400	0.0	-7.1
<b>Construction</b>	38,000	39,700	35,600	-4.3	6.7
<b>Manufacturing</b>	75,900	76,300	77,100	-0.5	-1.6
Durable Goods	46,700	46,900	47,800	-0.4	-2.3
Lumber & Wood Products	11,200	11,500	13,400	-2.6	-16.4
Logging	2,000	2,200	2,500	-9.1	-20.0
Sawmills & Planing Mills	3,900	4,000	4,800	-2.5	-18.8
Wood Buildings & Mobile Homes	1,200	1,200	1,500	0.0	-20.0
Other Lumber & Wood Products	4,100	4,100	4,600	0.0	-10.9
Stone, Clay, Glass & Concrete Products	1,600	1,600	1,500	0.0	6.7
Fabricated Metal Products, exc. Machinery & Transportation Equip.	3,200	3,200	3,100	0.0	3.2
Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment	10,500	10,600	10,600	-0.9	-0.9
Electronic & Other Electrical Equip. & Components, Exc., Computer	14,300	14,100	13,100	1.4	9.2
Transportation Equipment	2,000	2,100	2,400	-4.8	-16.7
Other Durable Goods	3,900	3,800	3,700	2.6	5.4
Nondurable Goods	29,200	29,400	29,300	-0.7	-0.3
Food Processing	17,000	17,200	17,300	-1.2	-1.7
Canned, Frozen, & Preserved Fruits, Vegetables & Food Specialties	9,400	9,400	9,900	0.0	-5.1
Paper Products	2,300	2,300	2,300	0.0	0.0
Printing, Publishing & Allied Products	5,600	5,600	5,200	0.0	7.7
Chemicals & Allied Products	2,200	2,200	2,200	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	2,100	2,100	2,300	0.0	-8.7
<b>SERVICE-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	453,600	452,300	435,500	0.3	4.2
<b>Transportation, Communications, &amp; Utilities</b>	27,800	28,000	27,300	-0.7	1.8
Transportation	17,500	17,600	17,200	-0.6	1.7
Railroad	1,500	1,500	1,500	0.0	0.0
Motor Freight Transportation & Warehousing	9,900	10,000	11,000	-1.0	-10.0
Communications	6,400	6,400	6,100	0.0	4.9
Electric, Gas, & Sanitary Services	3,900	4,000	4,000	-2.5	-2.5
<b>Trade</b>	146,700	145,000	139,900	1.2	4.9
Wholesale Trade	33,700	33,500	32,700	0.6	3.1
Durable Goods	15,100	15,000	14,800	0.7	2.0
Nondurable Goods	18,600	18,500	17,900	0.5	3.9
Retail Trade	113,000	111,500	107,200	1.3	5.4
Building Materials, Hardware, Garden Supply & Manuf. Home Dealers	6,600	6,700	6,300	-1.5	4.8
General Merchandise Stores	14,800	14,300	12,300	3.5	20.3
Food Stores	20,500	20,500	19,800	0.0	3.5
Automotive Dealers & Gasoline Service Stations	12,300	12,400	12,200	-0.8	0.8
Eating & Drinking Places	37,900	37,300	35,800	1.6	5.9
<b>Finance, Insurance &amp; Real Estate</b>	23,800	23,700	23,700	0.4	0.4
Banking	7,600	7,600	7,400	0.0	2.7
<b>Services</b>	144,700	144,600	135,900	0.1	6.5
Hotels & Other Lodging Places	8,100	8,000	7,800	1.3	3.8
Personal Services	4,300	4,200	4,300	2.4	0.0
Business Services	30,200	30,000	26,200	0.7	15.3
Amusement and Recreation Services	6,400	5,700	5,700	12.3	12.3
Health Services	36,200	36,100	35,100	0.3	3.1
Hospitals	11,700	11,600	11,200	0.9	4.5
Engineering, Accounting, Research, Management, & Related Services	18,100	18,500	17,100	-2.2	5.8
<b>Government</b>	110,600	111,000	108,700	-0.4	1.7
Federal Government	12,800	13,100	12,200	-2.3	4.9
State & Local Government	97,800	97,900	96,500	-0.1	1.3
State Government	27,800	28,000	29,200	-0.7	-4.8
Education	14,200	14,500	15,500	-2.1	-8.4
Administration	13,600	13,500	13,700	0.7	-0.7
Local Government	70,000	69,900	67,300	0.1	4.0
Education	40,500	40,500	38,100	0.0	6.3
Administration	29,500	29,400	29,200	0.3	1.0

\*-Preliminary Estimate

2-Estimates include all full or part time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay in the following industry groups during the pay period ending nearest the 12th of the month.

DATA PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

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State Table 3: Economic Indicators

State Table C: Economic Indicators

	Dec 2000	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE <sup>(1)</sup>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	673,900	677,400	662,700	-0.5	1.7
Unemployment	32,900	32,900	29,100	0.0	13.1
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	4.9	4.9	4.4		
Total Employment	641,000	644,500	633,600	-0.5	1.2
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	671,800	677,800	660,700	-0.9	1.7
Unemployment	33,700	29,600	30,300	13.9	11.2
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	5.0	4.4	4.6		
Total Employment	638,100	648,200	630,400	-1.6	1.2
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE <sup>(2)</sup>					
	4.0	4.0	4.1		
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>(2)</sup>					
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	170.7	170.9	165.1	-0.1	3.4
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	174.0	174.1	168.3	-0.1	3.4
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture Employment	27,910	30,990	27,270	-9.9	2.3
Operators	9,010	9,010	9,010	0.0	0.0
Unpaid Family	410	480	400	-14.6	2.5
Hired Workers	18,490	21,500	17,860	-14.0	3.5
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
<b>Claims Activities</b>					
Initial Claims <sup>(3)</sup>	14,140	13,043	14,747	8.4	-4.1
Weeks Claimed <sup>(4)</sup>	64,072	45,201	58,817	41.7	8.9
<b>Benefit Payment Activities<sup>(5)</sup></b>					
Weeks Compensated	51,602	35,352	48,336	46.0	6.8
Total Benefit \$ Paid	10,635,777	7,068,402	9,400,477	50.5	13.1
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$206.11	\$199.94	\$194.48	3.1	6.0
Covered Employers	39,089	39,016	38,025	0.2	2.8
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months <sup>(4)</sup>	\$106,609,871	\$105,374,570	\$105,459,964	1.2	1.1

(1) Preliminary Estimate

(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

(3) Includes all entitlements/programs on Intrastate and Interstate Agent, New, and Additional Claims

(4) Includes all entitlements/programs, Intrastate and Interstate Agent

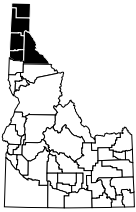
(5) Includes all entitlements/programs, Total Liabile Activities

**HOURS AND EARNINGS**

	Average Weekly Earnings*			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Dec 2000	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	Dec 2000	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	Dec 2000	Nov 2000	Dec 1999
Mining	\$604.16	\$596.69	\$568.33	39.8	39.7	38.9	\$15.18	\$15.03	\$14.61
Construction	\$618.62	\$647.34	\$555.98	38.4	39.4	35.3	\$16.11	\$16.43	\$15.75
Total Manufacturing	\$573.39	\$593.35	\$548.00	39.3	40.2	40.0	\$14.59	\$14.76	\$13.70
Lumber & Wood Products	\$507.47	\$509.59	\$479.06	36.3	36.9	37.9	\$13.98	\$13.81	\$12.64
Food & Kindred Products	\$461.37	\$490.77	\$459.02	39.0	41.0	40.3	\$11.83	\$11.97	\$11.39
Communications	\$742.56	\$696.14	\$731.42	42.0	40.1	41.3	\$17.68	\$17.36	\$17.71
Electric, Gas, & Sanitary Services	\$904.65	\$912.91	\$740.95	39.8	39.9	36.9	\$22.73	\$22.88	\$20.08
Trade	\$316.20	\$319.80	\$309.41	30.0	30.0	29.3	\$10.54	\$10.66	\$10.56
Wholesale Trade	\$507.11	\$512.78	\$496.67	38.1	38.7	35.2	\$13.31	\$13.25	\$14.11
Retail Trade	\$263.54	\$264.83	\$256.50	27.8	27.5	27.7	\$9.48	\$9.63	\$9.26

DATA PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

\* These average earnings are computed on a gross basis and reflect changes in premium pay for overtime and late shift work as well as changes in basic hourly and incentive wage.



# PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Panhandle Labor Market Area unemployment rate fell from 8.9 percent in November 2000 to 8.4 percent in December 2000. An early start to winter pushed the unemployment rate up in November, when many construction, transportation, logging, and other outdoor workers were laid off a month earlier than normal. Despite the snow and slush at lower elevations, November did not bring enough snow to the ski slopes and the winter ski season did not start by Thanksgiving. The late start held back normal November job surges at ski areas, hotels, restaurants, and stores in the Sandpoint and Kellogg areas.

Despite the drop from November to December 2000, the unemployment rate was considerably higher than in December 1999. The higher unemployment rate primarily resulted from job losses in the *Lumber & Wood Products* industry in the second half of 2000.

January and February brought more snow to area ski resorts and snowmobile trails, bringing more visitors to winter attractions. Schweitzer's new chairlift helped it break last year's record attendance, while Silver Mountain now believes that it probably will host the same number of skiers this season as in the previous year.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Bonner County

- RailQuest America recently purchased Montana Rockies Rail Tour. RailQuest plans to keep the six-year-old venture in Sandpoint; the previous owner was considering moving it to Portland, Oregon. RailQuest offers four train tours to Glacier Park, Yellowstone Park, the Grand Tetons, and from Sandpoint to Livingston, Montana. The train tours entertain 2,000 passengers a year. The train cars, including the locomotive, dining car, and domed observation cars, are vintage cars from the 1940s and 1950s. RailQuest

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	90,580	92,650	89,090	-2.2	1.7
Unemployed	7,590	8,250	6,180	-8.0	22.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.4	8.9	6.9		
Total Employment	82,990	84,400	82,910	-1.7	0.1
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	91,290	92,800	89,760	-1.6	1.7
Unemployed	8,200	7,370	6,800	11.3	20.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	9.0%	7.9%	7.6%		
Total Employment	83,090	85,430	82,960	-2.7	0.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	67,210	67,810	65,710	-0.9	2.3
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	14,630	15,070	14,820	-2.9	-1.3
Mining	980	990	1,000	-1.0	-2.0
Construction	4,830	5,200	4,830	-7.1	0.0
Manufacturing	8,820	8,880	8,990	-0.7	-1.9
Lumber & Wood Products	4,170	4,220	4,600	-1.2	-9.3
All Other Manufacturing	4,650	4,660	4,390	-0.2	5.9
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	52,580	52,740	50,890	-0.3	3.3
Transportation	1,530	1,530	1,480	0.0	3.4
Communication & Utilities	1,070	1,070	1,030	0.0	3.9
Wholesale Trade	2,310	2,280	2,240	1.3	3.1
Retail Trade	15,610	15,740	15,490	-0.8	0.8
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,530	2,460	2,500	2.8	1.2
Service & Miscellaneous	16,310	16,240	15,380	0.4	6.0
Government Administration	7,710	7,920	7,470	-2.7	3.2
Government Education	5,510	5,500	5,300	0.2	4.0

\* Preliminary estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

employs eight people year-round and an additional seventeen people in the summer.

- The Sandpoint Elks recently opened the new \$650,000 6,600-square foot clubhouse at their nine-hole golf course on State Highway 200 east of Sandpoint. The Elks will use the clubhouse—which includes a restaurant, bar, banquet and conference room, and pro shop—as their lodge. The Elks Building in downtown Sandpoint has been sold and converted into offices.
- Harbor Resorts, owner of Schweitzer Mountain Resort, plans to develop White Pine Lodge, a \$15 million development of 48 condominiums, fitness center, sauna, and retail space. Construction is scheduled to start in April and end by early 2002. White Pine Lodge is the beginning of a pedestrian plaza of retail and condo space called Schweitzer Village. The 10-year plan calls for adding at least one building to Schweitzer Village each year. Harbor Resort plans to turn Schweitzer into a year-round destination resort, so it is working with Hidden Lakes Golf Course on joint marketing for the summer tourist season.

## Kootenai County

- The University of Idaho Research Park in Post Falls recently signed up two new tenants—Questal Technologies and Quantum Lighting LLC. Questal, a Canadian manufacturer of energy-saving lighting system regulators, will open a laboratory for research, software development, and quality assurance. About five people will work in the Questal lab. Quantum, Questal's Spokane-based distributor, expects to employ seven people at its Post Falls sales office.
- Leone & Keeble, of Spokane, will begin construction this May on a \$4.9 million residence hall on the North Idaho College (NIC) campus in Coeur d'Alene. The residence hall will be built in an L-shape around the old Fort Sherman officers' quarters, which now are faculty offices. Currently, the community college has no on-campus housing. The new residence hall will provide space for 200 students. The hall also will allow NIC to host special summer programs that could bring hundreds of visitors each year. When it opens at the beginning of 2002, NIC will hire people for administrative, custodial, and food service positions. NIC already employs about 900 people.
- ESES Bistro recently opened at the Mullan Plaza across from Quad Park in Post Falls. The new restaurant serves international cuisine and wines in a casual atmosphere.
- Rathdrum's rapid population growth attracted three new businesses—Perfection Tire & Automotive Repair, Prairie Animal Hospital, and Interstate Office Supply. They soon will move into new buildings under construction at the 27-acre Park Wood Plaza, anchored by Super 1 Foods.
- The Fourth Street Trading Company is a cooperative formed by the Fourth Street Loft, Antique Windows, Canary Cottage, Chrysalis Home, J.J. Antiques, Marilyn Fisher Art, Heart's Desire Studio, River City Stained Glass, Divine Designs, Season's Beauty, Val's Whimsy, and Vintage Bliss. The cooperative members recently moved into a 6,000-square foot space in the old Roxy Theater at 115 S. Fourth Street in downtown Coeur d'Alene. Independently owned businesses, the cooperative members share overhead, cash registers, and some advertising. Jointly, they offer clothing, linens, pillows, antiques, stained-glass windows, handcrafted gifts, paintings, and furniture.
- Stimson Lumber purchased Idaho Forest Industries (IFI) in November. The Richards family owned the Coeur d'Alene-based IFI for 80 years. At the time of the purchase, IFI operated two mills in Coeur d'Alene and a mill in Priest River, and owned 89,000 acres of timberland in North Idaho. IFI employed 450 people. Stimson—which owns mills in Oregon, Washington, Mon-

tana, and California—kept all of IFI's mill workers, but laid-off a few people at IFI's headquarters because of duplication.

## Shoshone County

The Silver Valley received a devastating blow when the 117-year-old Sunshine Mine closed on February 16.

Silver prices hovering below \$4.60 per ounce already had caused the silver mine at Big Creek to reduce its workforce from 230 employees in June 2000 to 170 employees by January 2001. In early February, Sunshine received word of the imminent closure of the smelter where it sent its silver concentrate, the Asarco smelter in East Helena, Montana. Sunshine was not able to find another smelter that would take its silver concentrate at an economical rate.

When the mine shut down February 16, more than 130 miners immediately lost their jobs. Approximately 35 people will remain working for three months, while they put the mine on care-and-maintenance status. Care-and-maintenance status will allow the mine to re-open quickly, if silver prices rise significantly.

Now that Sunshine is closed, only two mines remain open in the historic Silver Valley. Hecla Mining's Lucky Friday Mine near Mullan and Coeur Silver Valley Resource's Galena Mine near Wallace employ more than 200 people each.

Following the Sunshine shutdown, Shoshone County's *Mining* employment fell to an estimated 540 jobs, its lowest level since early 1996, and 26 percent less than March 2000.

Kellogg Job Service is providing job search, relocation, and job training assistance to Sunshine miners. Miners will find it difficult to find comparable high-paying jobs in Shoshone County, whose unemployment rate before the closure already hovered around 10 percent. The average annual wage paid by Shoshone County's mining sector in 1999 was \$38,541, while the average annual wage paid by all other sectors was \$21,559.

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# SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Seaport Table 1, the Seaport Labor Market Area (LMA) seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was 4.4 percent, six-tenths of a percentage point below the November rate of 5.0 percent. In December 1999, the rate was 3.3 percent. However, the December decrease in total employment was unusual. December is traditionally a strong employment month. One of the reasons for the decrease was that holiday sales lagged behind last year. Starting in October, area retail managers predicted a slow holiday season, and overall, they were correct as stores reported holiday sales were down from last year.

In December, Seaport LMA *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 210 jobs from November 2000. Nearly all sectors contributed to the increase from November to December, with *Construction, Insurance and Services* creating the majority of new jobs.

Despite other strong areas, *Trade* jobs decreased due to decreases in holiday sales, and total *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* have substantially decreased by 930 jobs from December 1999. Layoffs in key *Manufacturing* sectors started job decreases that rippled through the economy. The economic concern is that all industries posted decreases year over year, which means that there was little economic growth to help soften the layoffs.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: Minimum Wage

Increases in Washington State minimum wage laws have generated local interest in the Seaport LMA. People in communities such as Lewiston, which borders Clarkston, Washington and Moscow, which borders Pullman, Washington are wondering about impacts of the increase. Will the increase in Washington state minimum wage increase wages in Lewiston and Moscow, and will productive/trained workers migrate to Clarkston and Pullman for the better pay? Factors like size of increase, time period allowed for the increase to occur, labor and product market conditions, labor shortages/surpluses, the unemployment rate, and prevailing market wage levels for entry-level workers need to be evaluated to answer these questions. In addition, the skills and productivity of affected workers, the rate of inflation, and the ability of employers to absorb or pass on their higher labor costs will also effect the answer to these questions.

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	34,370	34,890	35,550	-1.5	-3.3
Unemployment	1,520	1,750	1,130	-13.1	34.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4%	5.0%	3.2%	-0.6%	-1.2%
Total Employment	32,850	33,140	34,420	-0.9	-4.6
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	34,500	34,760	35,660	-0.7	-3.3
Unemployment	1,580	1,590	1,180	-0.6	33.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6%	4.6%	3.3%	0.0%	-1.3%
Total Employment	32,920	33,170	34,480	-0.8	-4.5
<b>JOB BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	25,430	25,220	26,360	0.8	-3.5
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	4,920	4,840	5,430	1.7	-9.4
Mining & Construction	1,130	1,080	1,290	4.6	-12.4
Manufacturing	3,790	3,760	4,140	0.8	-8.5
Food Processing	60	60	130	0.0	-53.8
Lumber & Wood Products	730	700	790	4.3	-7.6
Paper Products	1,720	1,730	1,820	-0.6	-5.5
All Other Manufacturing	1,280	1,270	1,400	0.8	-8.6
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	20,510	20,380	20,930	0.6	-2.0
Transportation	1,350	1,360	1,340	-0.7	0.7
Communications & Utilities	290	280	280	3.6	3.6
Wholesale Trade	1,040	1,030	1,070	1.0	-2.8
Retail Trade	5,280	5,330	5,430	-0.9	-2.8
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,450	1,400	1,480	3.6	-2.0
Services	6,900	6,830	7,060	1.0	-2.3
Government Administration	1,780	1,780	1,790	0.0	-0.6
Government Education	2,420	2,370	2,480	2.1	-2.4
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

For now, local employers have hinted that increasing wages would cause them to:

- Pass the additional expense on to consumers via higher prices;
- Shift the cost, or part of it, to workers by either reducing the benefit portion of total compensation, or by simply limiting future wage growth;
- Eliminate jobs through substitution, by replacing workers with machines or computers;
- Manage workers and overall operations more efficiently (use more part-time or temporary workers);
- Boost labor productivity (e.g., raise hiring standards, provide more training and better equipment);
- Accept lower profits; or
- Seek changes to the minimum wage law to allow a longer list of workers excluded from the law.

There is some confusion on minimum wage. Here are the facts: Washington State's minimum wage increased from \$6.50 an hour to \$6.72 an hour January 1, 2001. Future increases will be automatically linked to the cost of living. Nationwide, Washington State ranks near the top in highest state minimum wage. The minimum wage in Idaho is the same as the Federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour. The most recent change in the federal law was a two-step increase from \$4.25 to \$5.15, passed in August 1996. The federal minimum wage is the default wage for all states, unless they choose to set a minimum wage above the federal rate (federal law provides that the higher of the two wages prevails).

## **AREA DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Clearwater County**

- Brookside Landing Retirement Center in Orofino is nearing completion. During the holidays, individuals and groups were given sneak previews of the accommodations and services. The facility features a large reception area, a large family room, activities room, a library and a personal care room. There will be emergency call buttons in each apartment, cable TV and telephone hookups, storage units and ample parking. Many of the apartments have a patio or balcony. The facility will be staffed with dietary, housekeeping, activity, maintenance and personal care workers. According to owners, inquiries have already been made from local people about moving their parents to Orofino from out of state.

### **Idaho and Lewis Counties**

- Locally owned Union Warehouse and Supply Company of Grangeville is looking at the possibility of merging with the Lewiston regional national cooperative Cenex Harvest States. According to the owner of Union Warehouse and Supply, the merger is similar to the trend in small family farms, which are going by the wayside and merging with large farms. Union Warehouse and Supply is trying for this same type of efficiency.
- Cove Corporation is a new face at Grangeville's White Horse Business Center on Highway U.S. 95. The company provides an on-line interactive conferencing service. With the click of a mouse, people throughout the world connect to speak with one another, see each other, and view slides, videos, and software applications. According to the company, many institutions and businesses use the service to save time and money spent for conferences, meetings and training by utilizing the custom-designed virtual classrooms through Internet connections.

### **Latah County**

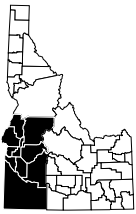
- A revamped teaching and learning center at the University of Idaho received the green light from the Governor. The Teaching and Learning Center project involves a comprehensive renovation of the University Classroom Center, with an estimated price tag of \$13.2 million.

### **Nez Perce and Asotin Counties**

- Potlatch Corporation in Lewiston is eliminating 124 jobs at its pulp, paperboard and consumer tissue operations. Of the jobs being eliminated, as many as 80 of those in the maintenance and production areas will be eligible for early retirement. This announcement marks the second time in less than a year that Potlatch, the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley's largest employer, has implemented large-scale job reductions. In June it cut about 100 salaried positions. It announced in January it had its worst year in more than a decade, losing \$33.2 million in 2000.
- Lewis-Clark State College's new activity center has also been approved by the Governor. The activity center project would replace the existing gymnasium and adjacent classrooms. The project is estimated to cost \$16.4 million.
- Convergys, a firm that had planned to bring 400 jobs to the Lewiston-Clarkston valley, has decided to withdraw. Convergys decision-makers evaluated client needs, industry trends and the capacity of its 46 customer contact centers around the world and decided that they didn't need another center in Idaho at this time. Since Convergys announced its plans in September to bring a call center to Lewiston, the city has secured \$1.8 million in state and federal grants. The money was earmarked for streets and water and sewer systems for the Port of Lewiston's business technology park east of Thain Grade. The withdrawal has all but eliminated the possibility of the city receiving the grants for the industrial park development because the grants were based on the number of jobs created. Unless a major employer has promised to locate a business there, a community doesn't qualify. At the same time, businesses often need to move quickly before the economy changes and can't wait for all the pieces to be in place. Convergys' reversal was at least the second round of bad news for north central Idaho's economy in less than a week, partnered with the Potlatch economic report.
- A 3-year-old Idaho home health care business has opened its third location in downtown Lewiston. A Full Life Agency, at 618 D Street, decided to open in Lewiston at the request of clients who moved to Lewiston from Hayden or Boise, the other towns where the business operates. The new business provides housekeeping, meal preparation, bathing, grooming, exercise programs, transportation and outside maintenance. It also handles paperwork for Medicaid reimbursement.

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# TREASURE VALLEY

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY, & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The December 2000 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was 3.2 percent, as shown in Treasure Valley Table 1. This rate remains unchanged from November 2000 and from December 1999. The number of unemployed persons is down 100 individuals from November, and up 200 individuals from a year ago. The number of persons employed grew by 300 over the month and increased by 7,200 persons from one year ago. Including the employed and the unemployed individuals, the *Civilian Labor Force* grew by 200 over the month and by 7,400 over the year in the Boise City MSA.

The Boise City MSA *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 1,000 jobs from November 2000 and increased 9,000 jobs from December 1999. *Goods-Producing Industries* lost 100 workers over the month with decreases noted in *Construction & Mining* (200 jobs), *Wood Buildings & Mobile Homes Manufacturing* (100 jobs), *Other Durable Goods Manufacturing* (300 jobs), and *Other Nondurable Goods Manufacturing* (100 jobs). The job losses in these industries outpaced job growth in *Other Lumber & Wood Products Manufacturing* (100 jobs), *Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment* (200 jobs), and *Electronic & Other Electrical Equipment & Components except Computer Equipment* (300 jobs). *Service-Producing Industries* gained 1,100 jobs over the month with nearly 64 percent of the increases noted in *Retail Trade*. The large increases in *Trade* may be attributed to an influx of seasonal employees in these establishments during the holiday shopping frenzy. *Business Services* gained 500 jobs over

Treasure Valley Table 1: Boise MSA Labor Force & Employment  
(Ada and Canyon counties)

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	239,600	239,400	232,200	0.1	3.2
Unemployment	7,600	7,700	7,400	-1.3	2.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.2	3.2		
Total Employment	232,000	231,700	224,800	0.1	3.2
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	242,300	243,200	234,800	-0.4	3.2
Unemployment	7,600	7,100	7,500	7.0	1.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.1	2.9	3.2		
Total Employment	234,700	236,100	227,300	-0.6	3.3
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	226,600	225,600	217,600	0.4	4.1
<b>GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	54,000	54,100	52,500	-0.2	2.9
<b>Mining &amp; Construction</b>	16,800	17,000	15,500	-1.2	8.4
<b>Manufacturing</b>	37,200	37,100	37,000	0.3	0.5
Durable Goods	28,500	28,300	28,100	0.7	1.4
Lumber & Wood Products	3,400	3,400	3,600	0.0	-5.6
Wood Buildings & Mobile Homes	800	900	1,100	-11.1	-27.3
Other Lumber & Wood Products	2,600	2,500	2,500	4.0	4.0
Fabricated Metal Products	1,300	1,300	1,300	0.0	0.0
Ind. & Comm. Mach. & Computer Equip.	8,200	8,000	8,300	2.5	-1.2
Electronic & Other Elect. Equip. & Comp.	12,200	11,900	11,200	2.5	8.9
Transportation Equipment	1,600	1,600	1,900	0.0	-15.8
Other Durable Goods	1,800	2,100	1,800	-14.3	0.0
Nondurable Goods	8,700	8,800	8,900	-1.1	-2.2
Food Products	5,800	5,800	6,100	0.0	-4.9
Canned Cured & Frozen Foods	2,100	2,100	2,200	0.0	-4.5
Printing, Pub & Allied Products	2,000	2,000	1,900	0.0	5.3
Other Nondurable Goods	900	1,000	900	-10.0	0.0
<b>SERVICE-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	172,600	171,500	165,100	0.6	4.5
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Util</b>	11,400	11,500	11,300	-0.9	0.9
Transportation	6,700	6,600	6,600	1.5	1.5
Comm & Elec, Gas & Sanitary Services	4,700	4,900	4,700	-4.1	0.0
<b>Trade</b>	56,900	56,300	53,900	1.1	5.6
Wholesale Trade	13,300	13,400	13,200	-0.7	0.8
Durable Goods	7,700	7,700	7,500	0.0	2.7
Nondurable Goods	5,600	5,700	5,700	-1.8	-1.8
Retail Trade	43,600	42,900	40,700	1.6	7.1
General Merchandise Stores	6,000	5,810	4,700	3.3	27.7
Foods Stores	8,300	8,200	7,900	1.2	5.1
Eating & Drinking Places	14,900	14,800	14,000	0.7	6.4
Other Retail Trade	14,400	14,090	14,100	2.2	2.1
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	11,700	11,700	11,400	0.0	2.6
<b>Services</b>	59,300	59,000	55,700	0.5	6.5
Business Services	15,000	14,500	13,600	3.4	10.3
Health Services	16,400	16,400	15,600	0.0	5.1
Hospitals	7,600	7,600	7,100	0.0	7.0
Eng., Acct., Res., Mngmt., & Related	4,500	4,500	4,100	0.0	9.8
Other Services	23,400	23,600	22,400	-0.8	4.5
<b>Government</b>	33,300	33,000	32,800	0.9	1.5
Federal Government	3,900	4,000	4,600	-2.5	-15.2
State Government	12,300	12,000	11,900	2.5	3.4
Education	4,800	4,500	4,200	6.7	14.3
Administration	7,500	7,500	7,700	0.0	-2.6
Local Government	17,100	17,000	16,300	0.6	4.9
Education	11,300	11,300	10,700	0.0	5.6
Administration	5,800	5,700	5,600	1.8	3.6

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

the month, primarily in temporary service agencies. From December 1999 to December 2000, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 9,000. *Goods-Producing Industries* accounted for nearly 17 percent of these increases, adding 1,500 jobs over the year. The increase was primarily in *Mining & Construction* with the addition of 1,300 jobs and *Electronic & Other Electronic Equipment & Component Manufacturing*, which added 1,000 jobs over the year. *Service-Producing Industries* accounted for the other 83 percent of jobs added over the year. The majority of jobs were added in *Retail Trade* (2,900 jobs), *Business Services* (1,400 jobs), and *Other Services* (1,000 jobs).

### **SPECIAL TOPICS: BOISE CASCADE**

On February 13, Boise Cascade Corporation announced the permanent closure of the company's plywood and lumber operations and cogeneration facility in Emmett and its sawmill in Cascade. The facilities will close this year in mid-June, which will allow the company to deplete its inventory at those locations. The closures of these facilities will affect 375 total workers, 275 in Emmett, 80 in Cascade, and 20 additional forestry and administrative positions within the company. Boise Cascade will continue to operate the laminated beam facility in Emmett and the River Bend remanufacturing facility in Horseshoe Bend. The Department of Labor has sent a rapid response team to work with the workers of Boise Cascade in these communities in providing immediate assistance in terms of organizing unemployment insurance, job search efforts, and training services to the workers.

### **AREA DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **Boise City MSA**

- The Boise Airport expansion/renovation project is underway. Included in the project is a new 256,000-square foot, three-story terminal that will include an expanded ticketing area that will add five new counters. Terminal access improvements will be made for passengers driving to the airport, including much easier access to ticketing counters on the second level, and baggage-claim areas on the ground level. New security systems and a new baggage handling system will be added along with a new parking lot. No final cost of the project has been announced, although the project could cost near \$100 million. The entire expansion project should be completed in 2003.
- Washington Group International, Inc. was

awarded a contract worth \$8.4 billion over six years, the largest contract in the company's 89-year history. No new jobs will be created in Boise, but the company's financial standing will become stronger as a result of the contract in South Carolina with the Department of Energy. Westinghouse Savannah River Co. LLC was awarded a six-year extension to operate its sprawling Savannah River complex. Westinghouse Savannah River Co. is a company that is led by Washington Group International and includes Bechtel, BWXT, and BNFL, Inc.

- The Idanha Hotel at 10<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets in downtown Boise will open its renovated interior early this year. The hotel, opened nearly 100 years ago, will open this year as apartments. The final touches are being put on the apartments and should be completed in April.
- Faust home-décor store closed its doors in January. The 5,500-square foot store was located in the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Marketplace. Company officials did not cite specific reasons for the closure. Two smaller businesses in the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Marketplace and the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Marketplace Theater were also closed in the same month.
- Rent-A-Center opened a new Boise outlet in January, and announced plans to open another six stores in Idaho and Oregon by April 2001. Both Nampa and Caldwell have been named as possible sites for some stores.
- The Furniture Outlet Super Store in Boise moved from its site in the Franklin Center at Orchard and Franklin to the former Fred Meyer building in the Hillcrest Shopping Center. The new facility offers a much larger space than the existing building. The company also announced that four or five new employees could be hired as a result of the move.
- Hummel Architects P.A. announced plans in January to build a two-story building on Bogus Basin Road that will provide the business more space and a chance to showcase some of its design abilities. In the next two years, the company plans to add ten employees. The company will move to the new site when completed and move out of the Hoff building in downtown Boise, where the company has been for the past five

years.

- Citadel Communications Corporation, the sixth largest radio broadcasting company in the nation, was sold in mid-January to the New York investment firm Forstmann Little & Co., for \$2 billion. The company operated five radio stations in Boise and had a total of 209 stations in 44 mid-size markets. Citadel's current management team released a statement stating that no changes in operations are expected and the management team will continue to run the company.
- Mountain West Bank received approval to build and operate a full-service branch in Meridian. The City of Meridian needs to grant approval before construction begins, and if approved, the Coeur d'Alene-based company hopes to start construction in February or March and open this summer. The Meridian branch will employ about 25 employees.
- Preco Electronics, a Boise electronics company, announced in early January that it acquired a contract worth \$10 million with Symbol Technologies. Preco will send about 12,000 mobile computing system units to the New York company that will place the units inside maintenance and service vehicles in North America. Preco employs about 500 people in the Treasure Valley.
- HostPro, a Micronpc.com web-hosting subsidiary, recently launched its first wireless Internet service in Boise. NetNow Fixed Wireless is being test-marketed in Boise and is targeted as an affordable way to provide broadband Internet access for small and medium businesses. If the initial offering in the test market in Boise is successful, HostPro's wireless service will be expanded to other markets.
- MCMS reduced the workforce at its Nampa location by 70 employees in January. Company officials cited a slowdown in the economy that affected the technology industry as the reason for the layoffs. Temporary positions at the site were reduced rather than permanent ones. If the economy picks up in the next few months, most of the positions lost will be reinstated and the workers could return.
- The new Cancer Treatment Center located at 3119 Commercial Way in Caldwell, near I-84 and Franklin Road, is now open. A partnership be-

tween St. Alphonsus and West Valley Medical Centers allowed the construction of the Caldwell Cancer Treatment Center. The two hospitals shared in the funding of the \$4.5 million center, which provides the latest technological advancements for cancer therapy. The new center offers the same treatments that are available in Boise but is more convenient for residents in the western end of the Treasure Valley.

- Environmental Oil Processing Technology, Inc., located in Nampa, started selling stock in January in an effort to raise money to expand operations beyond the Treasure Valley. The company takes used oil and turns it into products like diesel fuel and other more valuable commodities that will bring in a higher profit. The company uses a \$9 million refinery to produce these products.
- In late January, J.C. Penney announced the closure of about fifty stores throughout the country including the Catalog Service Center in Nampa this spring. Efforts are being made by the company to place four workers that will be affected by the closure at the Boise Towne Square Mall location, although it will remain open.
- The Pet Haven Thrift Store opened in mid-February at its new location at 619 Main Street in Caldwell. The new facility is nearly three-times larger than the previous facility. Proceeds from the sale of most donated items are used to support Pet Haven's shelter at 333 W. Orchard Street in Nampa.

#### **Elmore County**

- The Pilot Truck Stop has finally begun the rebuilding process after a fire destroyed it last July. The restaurant will not be rebuilt, but a fast food court will be included in the rebuilt structure. The construction should be completed and the truck stop reopened in late spring.
- In January, two new businesses opened in Elmore County. Renaissance Consignment is located at 360 S. Main Street and offers an opportunity to recycle home furnishings and collectibles. Curl-Up-N-Dye also opened in Mountain Home at 519 Airbase Road. The salon has four styling chairs, two nail stations, and four tanning beds.

#### **Gem County**

- In mid-January, the Emmett Planning & Zoning Commission awarded a special use permit to place a modular unit next to the current Gem County Jail facility to house minimum-risk inmates. A modular unit was not purchased before the approval was made, but the expected unit is approximately 8 by 54 feet and could house up to 12 inmates. The use of the modular unit should eliminate the need for Gem County to transport inmates to other counties. This is only a temporary solution to the crowded jail problem in Gem County.

#### **Payette County**

- In January, Independent-Enterprise Newspaper moved to a larger location about a block south of its original location to 124 S. Main in Payette. The move provided the paper with almost three times more space than the previous facility.
- Woodgrain Millwork in Fruitland announced a reduction of 40 employees on January 25. The cut-backs occurred in the company's prefabricated division and were equal to about one shift. The layoffs were a result of a downturn in the manufactured home industry. The layoffs in this industry were not unusual, as many of the prefabricated wood products and mobile home manufacturers have had a reduction in force over the past six months, both permanent and temporary.
- Chiquita, based in Cincinnati, released a statement in late January that announced the company could go bankrupt as a result of the European Union's (EU) system of tariffs and quotas designed to reduce imports. Officials at Chiquita Bands International, Inc. remain confident that the company will undergo some restructuring, but that bankruptcy or closing subsidiaries, including the Payette processing plant, are only rumors. The restructuring will have very little, if any, change to the operations at the Payette processing plant.

#### **Valley County**

- In January, the Star-News published a series of stories about the growing Hispanic population in McCall. Experts say that the increased demand for service workers in hotel, restaurant, and landscaping industries in resort towns are fueling the influx of Hispanic workers over the decade into

the area. The language barrier may be a problem, but most jobs allow a learning transfer for all involved, where English and Spanish speaking persons teach each other in the process of doing their jobs. Many people of Hispanic origin have moved to McCall mostly because there has been an increasing employment opportunity there and in surrounding areas in the last few years. The article mentioned that most people are moving there permanently as opposed to relocating for a temporary job and then leaving. For more information on this series, please contact the Star News in McCall.

#### **Washington County**

- In mid-January, the Weiser City Council opened the bidding period for contractors in building the Vendome Events Center. The new facility is expected to cost near \$1.2 million without counting architectural fees. Ground can be broken in March with completion of the project occurring sometime this fall.

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# MAGIC VALLEY

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA, & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As seen in Magic Valley Table 1, the December 2000 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Magic Valley Labor Market Area was 4.4 percent, which was unchanged from November 2000. Year over year, the 4.4 percent rate was seven-tenths of a percentage point higher than December 1999. Several *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* sectors experienced contraction in numbers from December 1999 to December 2000. The largest drop occurred in *Wholesale Trade*, dropping by 160 jobs or 6.6 percent. Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate and Retail Trade followed closely with 5.5 percent and 3.4 percent decreases respectively. The largest increases took place in *Government Administration* and *Government Education*. The overall picture is one of slowing economic and job growth, although *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* continued to actually grow slightly. There is some caution in the *Retail Trade* and *Services* sectors, as many employers hired fewer holiday workers this year. It will be important to monitor them as a measure of consumer confidence for future job creation and expansion. Businesses are showing more tendencies toward retaining or perhaps expanding the hours of existing employees rather than new job creation, and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues into 2001.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Twin Falls County

- Twin Falls Clinic and Hospital and St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise announced intentions to pursue a partnership. Twin Falls Clinic and Hospital had been weighing similar partnership options from both St. Alphonsus and Magic Valley Regional Medical Center in Twin Falls. Exact details of the partnerships have not yet been announced.

Magic Valley Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding counties

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	50,080	49,950	48,420	0.3	3.4
Unemployment	2,220	2,190	1,800	1.4	23.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4	4.4	3.7		
Total Employment	47,860	47,760	46,620	0.2	2.7
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	49,070	49,410	47,430	-0.7	3.5
Unemployment	2,280	1,900	1,860	20.0	22.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6	3.8	3.9		
Total Employment	46,790	47,510	45,570	-1.5	2.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>					
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	7,160	7,290	7,100	-1.8	0.8
Mining & Construction	2,050	2,130	2,020	-3.8	1.5
Manufacturing	5,110	5,160	5,080	-1.0	0.6
Durable Goods	750	780	760	-3.8	-1.3
Nondurable Goods	4,360	4,380	4,320	-0.5	0.9
Food Processing	3,360	3,390	3,320	-0.9	1.2
All Other Nondurable Goods	1,000	990	1,000	1.0	0.0
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	29,760	29,930	29,690	-0.6	0.2
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	3,060	3,110	3,070	-1.6	-0.3
Wholesale Trade	2,280	2,290	2,440	-0.4	-6.6
Retail Trade	7,840	7,870	8,120	-0.4	-3.4
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,370	1,360	1,450	0.7	-5.5
Services	8,510	8,720	8,670	-2.4	-1.8
Government Administration	3,730	3,630	3,520	2.8	6.0
Government Education	2,970	2,950	2,420	0.7	22.7

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

- AT&T Broadband and Phoenix-based Cable ONE, Inc., have announced that they will trade the assets of television systems in March. After the trade, Cable ONE will own cable systems serving subscribers in and around Twin Falls, Burley, Boise, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Lewiston, and Ontario, Oregon. AT & T Broadband will get systems serving Modesto and Santa Rosa, California. As a result of the change, five persons will lose their jobs, including the general manager, a technical operations manager, and three customer-service and field technician jobs in the Twin Falls and Burley areas. Cable ONE is already designing an upgrade of the Twin Falls cable system that will boost video capacity and pave the way for Cable ONE to offer high-speed cable modems for Internet access.
- The Twin Falls City Council unanimously approved a \$1 million bid to replace the City's Upflow Anaerobic Sludge Bed conditioning tank. This is a pre-sewage treatment tank that is important in controlling

odors created by the mixture of wastewater from Lamb-Weston and Glanbia Foods. Corrosion in the old tank has created odors that have prompted many citizen complaints in the Rock Creek Canyon area, and the new tank should alleviate the situation.

- The Farmhouse Collection—a family owned furniture manufacturing enterprise that relocated from the Wood River Valley to Twin Falls in 1998—and the College of Southern Idaho have teamed up for a joint training and job intern program to develop and retain woodworking employees for the Twin Falls facility. The Farmhouse Collection chose ten student workers from over 100 applicants. The students will spend their first semester learning basic skills and their second semester interning at The Farmhouse Collection shop. The program is an example of how the College of Southern Idaho can work with prospective new businesses and existing businesses to tailor training needs. Funding for much of these projects comes from Workforce Development Training Fund grants.

#### **Jerome, Blaine, Camas, Gooding, and Lincoln Counties**

- The City of Jerome unanimously voted to accept wastewater from a new sewer line to be constructed by the Jerome County Sewer and Water District for the Crossroads Ranch Development. This is a significant step in giving Crossroads Ranch the go-ahead to begin developing the 500-acre property located near Interstate 84 in southern Jerome County. The City and Crossroads Ranch have been negotiating this agreement since the property was purchased in 1994. The sewer line will be seven miles long and is estimated to cost the Jerome County Sewer and Water District \$4 million. The line will connect with the City's wastewater treatment plant on the northwest side of Jerome and the line will have capabilities to handle 1.8 million gallons per day. Crossroads Ranch developer Arlen Crouch has already begun to recruit businesses into the development, and it is hoped that the project will be a large economic development area for the Magic Valley.
- Jerome High School has been awarded a \$1.75 million grant from the Albertson's Foundation to be used to improve instruction and increase achievement in the Jerome School District. The State of Idaho recently implemented a new exiting standards examination that will apply to high school students graduating in 2005. The Jerome School Dis-

trict will be using the funds to align with state standards and improve instruction so that students are adequately prepared for the exit examination. The \$1.75 million will be awarded over three and a half years, with the first disbursement of \$455,000 arriving soon.

#### **Cassia and Minidoka Counties**

- Kraft Foods has purchased the old Thompson cash yards—the combination lumber yard, surplus business, and antique store that has been closed for about 25 years—in order to build a new milk receiving building. The two-bay drive through will accommodate more than 20 trucks per day when it is completed in the late spring. A finished product cooler also will be built on the property and is expected to be complete in early summer 2001. U.S. Auctions will be conducting the sale of Thompson Cash Yard's remaining inventory, and the buildings will be dismantled to make room for all of Kraft's eventual expansion.
- Rupert's downtown area is now an official national historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The listing of 48 historical elements on the register includes the Rupert Square, City Hall, and the Wilson Theater, as well as a number of businesses. Rupert hired an historical consultant to help write the nomination, which included a profile of each building and a description of how each building significantly impacted the commercial core of the city. A rigorous review of the nomination took place by an Idaho State Preservation Office committee to determine historical and architectural integrity.

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# SOUTHEAST IDAHO

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA, & POWER COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

Seasonally related employment fluctuations drove the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate up from 4.5 percent in November 2000 to 4.6 percent in December 2000. From November to December, the number of employed dropped by 120 individuals.

From one year ago, the change was also minimal. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased one-tenth of a percentage point from 4.7 percent in December 1999 to 4.6 percent in December 2000. From December 1999 to December 2000, the number of individuals in the *Civilian Labor Force* and the number of individuals employed both grew by 520, leaving little change in the unemployment rate over the year.

The unemployment rate in Southeast Idaho counties rose in December 2000 over November 2000. Southeast Idaho Table 2 shows that Caribou County and Power County had the highest unemployment rates in December 2000, and Franklin County had the lowest unemployment rate. Both Caribou and Power County experienced a rise in the number of unemployed individuals in December. Seasonal adjustments likely influenced the unemployment rates from December 1999 to December 2000 because of a colder winter this year over last year. From December 1999, every county experienced an increased unemployment rate, except Ban-

Southeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Pocatello City MSA (Bannock County)

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	41,320	41,390	40,800	-0.2%	1.3%
Unemployment	1,900	1,850	1,900	2.7%	0.0%
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6	4.5	4.7		
Total Employment	39,420	39,540	38,900	-0.3%	1.3%
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	41,690	42,120	41,190	-1.0%	1.2%
Unemployment	1,920	1,770	1,960	8.5%	-2.0%
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6	4.2	4.8		
Total Employment	39,770	40,350	39,230	-1.4%	1.4%
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	33,640	34,210	32,050	-1.7%	5.0%
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	4,480	4,650	4,750	-3.7%	-5.7%
Mining & Construction	1,550	1,640	1,870	-5.5%	-17.1%
Manufacturing	2,930	3,010	2,880	-2.7%	1.7%
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	29,160	29,560	27,300	-1.4%	6.8%
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	1,940	1,920	1,950	1.0%	-0.5%
Wholesale Trade	1,450	1,440	1,450	0.7%	0.0%
Retail Trade	7,320	7,450	7,110	-1.7%	3.0%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,490	1,480	1,440	0.7%	3.5%
Services	8,200	8,130	7,040	0.9%	16.5%
Government Administration	3,480	3,460	3,400	0.6%	2.4%
Government Education	5,280	5,680	4,910	-7.0%	7.5%

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

nock County.

As shown in Southeast Table 1, the number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* fell by 570 between November and December 2000. Seasonal conditions can have a huge affect on jobs during December, and may not follow the same pattern year after year. Since the number of jobs is counted during the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month, conditions may vary dramatically during December and can cause fluctuations in the number of jobs. Schools always have a long holiday break during December and January, but whether the number of jobs change significantly depends when the break occurs. If school is out during the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, then the number of jobs drops dramatically. If school is in session sometime during the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, then the number of jobs remains fairly constant. Weather and economic factors can also affect the number of jobs in December. During years of high snowfall, the number of jobs usually goes up in December. Additional jobs are created in government because of snow removal and road maintenance and in recreation because of jobs at ski resorts. Economic factors usually affect the number of *Retail Trade* jobs during December. *Retail Trade* jobs generally increase in November in preparation for the holiday shopping season. If holiday shopping is robust, those jobs usually remain through December. But, if holiday shopping does not meet expectations, those jobs will generally be eliminated before the December job count.

Seasonal factors drove the number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* down in December 2000 from November 2000. Most of the decreases occurred in *Government Education*

Southeast Idaho Table 2: Unemployment Rates

County	<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>		
	December		
	2000	2000	1999
Bannock	4.6	4.5	4.7
Bear Lake	6.1	5.3	5.5
Bingham	5.2	4.4	4.3
Caribou	7.2	5.5	5.4
Franklin	3.7	3.6	2.9
Oneida	3.8	3.4	3.3
Power	7.2	6.8	5.4

because schools closed for the holidays, temporarily eliminating 400 jobs. But the remarkable decrease was in *Retail Trade*, which dropped 130 jobs in December.

The *Goods-Producing Industries, Construction and Manufacturing*, split the decline of 170 jobs in December. This is a normal pattern for this time of year because cold weather delays new construction projects and food-processing manufacturing typically drops after the busy fall season. From one year ago, *Goods-Producing Industries'* jobs declined 5.7 percent, a loss of 270 jobs between December 1999 and December 2000. All job reductions were in *Construction*, which lost 320 jobs from last December. Some of the job reductions occurred because colder weather in December 2000 prevented construction activity. *Manufacturing* gained 50 jobs this December over December 1999.

The *Service-Producing Industries—Transportation, Communications & Utilities, Trade, Finance, Insurance & Real Estate, Services, and Government*—dropped 530 jobs from November to December 2000 because of declines in *Government Education* (400) and *Retail Trade* (130). *Government Education* declined in December because schools closed earlier for the holidays this year than last year. *Retail Trade* jobs jumped dramatically in October and November because of the opening of the new Fred Meyer Super Center and Walmart's expansion to a super store. In November, jobs in *Retail Trade* increased again as stores prepared for the holiday shopping season. By December, the biggest flurry of activity at the new super stores had begun to settle, retailers had experienced a slower holiday shopping pattern, and jobs were reduced. From one year ago, *Service-Producing Industries'* jobs increased 6.8 percent, a gain of 1,860 jobs between December 1999 and December 2000. Jobs increased in all service-producing sectors except *Transportation, Communications & Utilities. Services* increased the most at 16.5 percent and added 1,160 jobs. Most *Services* job growth occurred because of new jobs at Convergys' Call Center and increased use of temporary staffing agencies.

## AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

### Bannock County

- Pocatello hosted about 1,200 people at the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual University of Idaho Potato Conference. The two-day conference provides enhanced knowledge of the potato industry to growers, processors, and organizations.
- R Homes Corporation, of Pocatello, closed its business in December and eliminated 40 jobs. The business filed for bankruptcy in January.
- Union Pacific Railroad eliminated 14 jobs in its Pocatello locomotive department in January. According to railroad officials, the job reductions occurred because of indications of a nationwide economic slowdown.

### Bingham County

- Blackfoot will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> year as an incorporated city in 2001. The city has several activities planned throughout the year. Centennial activities officially kicked off January 16, the date Blackfoot be-

came incorporated, when Mayor Reece proclaimed 2001 the year of centennial observances in Blackfoot.

- Potato Management Company, a spin-off of the Potato Growers of Idaho, has been established to manage the year 2000 potato surplus. The organizations primary goal is to help raise the low price of potatoes. In an effort to bring the price of potatoes up to at least their production costs, about 250 potato growers have agreed to give up to 10 percent of their potatoes to a diversion program.

### Franklin County

- The Franklin County Library Board unveiled plans for a new library to be built in Preston. The facility will be 8,700-square feet in size and will cost about \$900,000. The board hopes to begin construction this spring.
- Nyoplast America, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia announced its plan to sell Preston's Head Manufacturing. The company manufactures PVC fittings and employs approximately 40 people. Nyoplast officials say the parent company, Nyoplast NV of the Netherlands, is overextended by operations in the United States and needs to concentrate on its European operations.

### Oneida County

- L.W. Miller Transportation, Incorporated purchased Dano's Chevron in Malad. The new owners will keep the current employees of the business and people will see minimal changes in its operation. The gas station/convenience store's name will change to L.W.'s Chevron and diesel service will be added next spring.

### Power County

- Construction work continues on the new high school and assisted living center in American Falls. Over the last few months, underground work has been done at the high school site. Currently, floors are being poured and the brick walls are being constructed. Exterior work is being completed on the new assisted living center, including brickwork and roofing. The assisted living center is expected to open in the spring of 2001.

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# NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) experienced a two-tenths of a percentage point increase in the unemployment rate from November to December of 2000. The LMA's current rate of 4.0 percent is an increase from 3.7 percent in December of 1999 (see Northeast Table 1). The unemployment rate is nine-tenths of a percentage point lower than the state's rate of 4.9 percent, and the same as the national rate.

Over the month, the seasonally adjusted *Civilian Labor Force* decreased by 200 people. Extreme temperatures and winter storms have limited some winter construction work while closures and layoffs have affected other workers. The number of unemployed persons increased by 130 people and the number of employed persons decreased by 340 people. Over the year, the *Civilian Labor Force* increased by 180 people, with an increase of 250 unemployed people. The yearly decrease in the number of employed was 70.

For December, Bonneville County had the lowest unemployment rate by far in the LMA with 3.3 percent, followed by Butte, Jefferson, and Bingham Counties at 4.3, 4.5, and 5.2 percent respectively. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, had an unemployment rate of 3.4 percent for the month, falling one-tenth of a percentage point from the previous month and staying the same as the previous year.

*Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* decreased by 330 jobs for the month. *Goods-Producing Industries* had decreases in every industry with *Construction (Heavy Construction and Special Trades)* shouldering the vast majority of losses, at 310 jobs. *Manufacturing (Nondurable Goods)* also showed a loss of 50 jobs. Both industries typically experience decreases at this time of year due to seasonal climate and market prices of commodities. The *Service-Producing Industries* showed an overall increase of 30 jobs, with small changes throughout each industry. Only *Government Administration (Local)* and *Transportation, Communication, & Utilities (Trucking and Warehouse)* showed decreases for the month. The largest increase, 30 jobs, was seen in *Wholesale Trade (Nondurables)*. While *Retail Trade* showed an increase of 10 jobs, the *General Merchandise* sector showed losses of 40 jobs following the 'after-Thanksgiving' rush.

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, & Jefferson counties

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	82,680	82,880	82,500	-0.2	0.2
Unemployment	3,290	3,160	3,040	4.1	8.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.0%	3.8%	3.7%		
Total Employment	79,390	79,730	79,460	-0.4	-0.1
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	81,970	82,920	81,820	-1.1	0.2
Unemployment	3,130	2,670	2,950	17.2	6.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8%	3.2%	3.6%		
Total Employment	78,840	80,250	78,870	-1.8	0.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>					
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	8,560	8,920	9,080	-4.0	-5.7
Mining & Construction	3,520	3,830	3,850	-8.1	-8.6
Manufacturing	5,040	5,090	5,230	-1.0	-3.6
Food Processing	2,670	2,690	2,910	-0.7	-8.2
Ind. & Com. Mach. & Computer Equip.	470	470	520	0.0	-9.6
All Other Manufacturing	1,900	1,930	1,800	-1.6	5.6
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	53,740	53,710	52,700	0.1	2.0
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,370	2,380	2,350	-0.4	0.9
Wholesale Trade	6,070	6,040	6,100	0.5	-0.5
Retail Trade	11,830	11,820	11,890	0.1	-0.5
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,890	1,890	1,910	0.0	-1.0
Services	21,250	21,240	20,400	0.0	4.2
Government Administration	5,020	5,040	4,710	-0.4	6.6
Government Education	5,310	5,300	5,340	0.2	-0.6
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

Over the year, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 520 jobs, mostly all coming from the *Service-Producing Industries*. *Services* showed an increase of 850 jobs, with 370 jobs coming from the *Engineering & Management* sector. *Government Administration* increased by 310 jobs, with *Local Administration* being the contributor. *Goods-Producing Industries* lost 520 jobs over the year, with 330 coming from *Construction* (both *Heavy Construction* and *Special Trade*) and 190 from *Manufacturing* (primarily *Food Processing*).

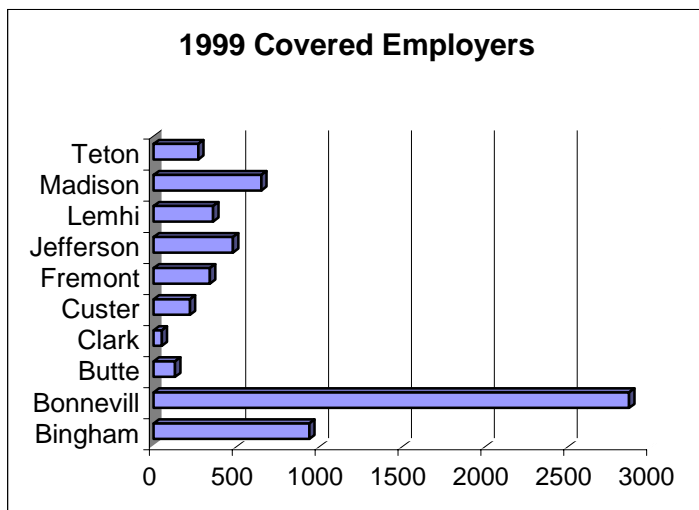
## SPECIAL TOPIC: COVERED EMPLOYERS IN N.E. IDAHO

Covered employers are defined as those covered by Idaho's Unemployment Insurance Law. The graph, 1999 Covered Employers, shows ten of the counties in the Northeast part of the state. Covered employers in the ten-county area total 6,310. Out of that, 8 employers have 1,000 or more employees; 13 employers have between 400 and 1,000 employees; 86 employers have between 100 and 400 employees; 180 employers have between 50 and 100; and the rest, 95.4 percent, have between 1 and 49 employees. The labor force in the ten counties was over 105,900 workers in 1999 and now is almost 109,000 strong.

As shown, Bonneville County had the largest number of covered employers, at 2,867, as of the fourth quarter of 1999. In relation to size of the Bonneville County employers, 5 have 1,000 or more employees; 3 have between 400 and 1,000 employees; 42 have between 100 and 400 employees; 117 have between 50 and 99 employees; and the rest are below 50 employees. Out of the covered em-

players, over 2,400 are in Idaho Falls city limits. Bonneville County also had more than double the labor force of any other county listed, 46,710 in the year of 1999.

Comparing the year 1998 to 1999, covered employers in the ten-county area increased by 3.5 percent, going from 6,096 to 6,310. Bonneville County also increased by 3.6 percent, or 100 employers.



#### AREA DEVELOPMENTS: Bonneville County

- The Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce named a new chief executive officer to replace Fred Sica. Michael Kuhns of Washington, IL will take his place on March 1, bringing with him a wealth of experience from the finance and high-tech industries. For the past eight years, Kuhns has been chief financial officer of an organization highly involved in coordinating economic development in the Peoria, IL area.
- The Eastern Idaho Economic Development Council named Jim Bowman as the new chief executive officer. Jim has been the interim director since October. Jim came to the council from Illinois earlier in the year 2000 where he had worked with economic and community issues for state government.
- Mrs. Powell's Cinnamon Rolls recently moved from the Grand Teton Mall food court to the Ammon Town Center. It is located in the old Bagleby's location next door to Albertson's. It plans to be open by the third week of February. Besides fresh cinnamon rolls, the store offers soups, breads, sandwiches, and salads. The Powells own three stores in Idaho; two in Idaho Falls and one in Boise.

#### Custer County

- Thompson Creek Mining Co. laid off another 65 workers the middle of January. The molybdenum mine is still operating with 60 employees who are taking on multi-disciplinary tasks to keep the mine in operation. The mine plans to continue operating for several more years if they can find the right production level of higher-grade molybdenum.

#### Fremont County

- At the Greater St. Anthony Chamber of Commerce banquet early in February, ML Technologies was awarded the Chamber's New Business of the Year Award and announced plans to triple its employees and purchase or lease an additional building in St. Anthony. The Idaho Falls-based computer consulting firm opened a location in St. Anthony last year and currently employs 15 people in technical positions. The owner, Fred Miyasaki, opened the business in 1988 as a spin-off from the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

#### Madison County

- Melaleuca Inc. held its ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for the new call center location on the corner of Main Street and First West in Rexburg. After spending \$1 million on renovation of an existing building, the center now employs 150 people and plans to add an additional 100 employees. It started operation in the new center in January. Melaleuca is a manufacturer and world-wide distributor of health, beauty aide, and cleaning products and is headquartered in Idaho Falls.
- Madison Memorial Hospital introduced their latest improvement in early February. The hospital now has a new \$1.7 million magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine. The tube is shorter and wider than most MRI's to help patients not feel so claustrophobic. Previously, the hospital had local MRI services twice a week with a mobile unit or patients had to go to Idaho Falls (sometimes at a tremendous ambulance cost) for emergency situations. This new addition follows other improvements such as a \$3.6 million Family Maternity Center, \$130,000 Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center, and the Short-Stay Therapy program.
- Terry Butifkofer has been named president for the Madison Economic Development Corp. in Rexburg. He will preside as president for the next two years. Terry worked for the East Central Idaho Planning and Development Association (ECIPDA) for the past 15 years, directing its workforce development programs and developing and managing community development projects. He is also chairman of ECIPDA's executive committee, is a member of the advisory board for Eastern Idaho Technical College, and staffs the workforce boards for East-Central Idaho.

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## Impacts of a National Recession on Idaho

by James L. Adams, Economist-Idaho Department of Labor

Since 1980, there have been two official economic recessions in the United States as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The first was for the period of July 1980 to November 1982; the second was for the period of July 1990 to March 1991.

BEA defines an economic recession as a drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for two consecutive quarters. GDP is a measure of the value of goods and services produced by the nation in a given period, usually adjusted for inflation. Because GDP is such a broad measure, it incorporates many other factors, including employment and productivity. Recessions most often happen after a period of economic growth.

The two national recessions since 1980 were caused by a variety of factors, but the two most cited are high inflation rates and high energy prices. During both recessions, job losses occurred at the tail end of the period.

Because there is now some discussion of the possibility of a national economic recession, the questions are—what have been the economic consequences of the past recessions on Idaho, and would these be likely to happen again?

An introductory note is in order. In many respects, Idaho's economy has always acted differently than the national one. Idaho generally has had a growing population base, leading to long-term increases in *Services Producing* jobs. Manufacturing jobs have comprised less than 20 percent of total jobs. There has been a strong reliance on natural resource jobs, including agriculture, as a driver to the overall economic structure of the state. However, this reliance has diminished in recent years, although for the rural areas of the state the reliance is still very strong. Because of the influence of natural resource jobs and weather patterns, Idaho's economy usually has seasonal ups and downs that are independ-

ent of national economic developments. Finally, Idaho's economy is a very small contributor to the national economy. For example, Idaho's labor force is about 0.5 percent of the nation's labor force. This means Idaho does not contribute much to the state of the nation's economy and that the structure and well being of the Idaho economy is, with some notable exceptions, largely dependent upon in-state developments.

The notable exceptions are: mining prices are globally influenced; lumber and wood products are subject to national and some foreign construction/housing markets and public land policies; fuel and transportation costs affect tourism, agriculture, and the movement of input and output products; and Idaho's high-tech manufacturing industries produce goods for the global market.

In addition, the state of the national economy and its regional components has had significant impact on Idaho's population growth, especially migration patterns. Much of Idaho's population growth in the last two decades has been attributed to high unemployment rates in California and manufacturing downsizing in the Mid-West and East. People moved here to find jobs (as well as for quality-of-life issues).

### How did Idaho fare during these recessions?

During both recessions, Idaho's **Gross State Product (GSP)** increased, but not at the growth rate of the immediately preceding year. GSP is a measure similar to the national GDP.

The state **unemployment rate** spiked up during the recession years, and the higher rates persisted for a few years after the official national economic recession period. In 1982, the annual average unemployment rate reached 9.9 percent. The highest rate for the 90s recession was 6.2 percent in 1991.

Only in 1980 and 1990 did **total employment** fail to grow. In 1980, there was a 2.9 percent decline in total employment, while in 1990 the decline was a marginal 0.1 percent. During the 1980s recession, there was a three-year decline in the number of **nonfarm jobs**; the state lost 17,775 jobs. However, during the 1990s recession there was an increase of 12,601 jobs.

In 1982, there was a significant increase in **unemployment insurance** weeks and dollars paid. Weeks claimed increased by 59 percent and dollars paid out by 75 percent. These costs declined somewhat in 1983, but remained considerably above pre-recession levels. Weeks claimed in 1992 were 75 percent higher than in 1990 and dollars paid were 88 percent more. As with the 1980s recession, the immediate post-recession year remained at high levels in both categories.

The recessions were felt especially hard in particular parts of the state. During the 1980s recession, 15 counties had double-digit (or nearly so) **county unemployment rates**. Mining and the forest-products industries particularly suffered due to inflation, high interest rates, and weak metal prices. Many of these counties still have high unemployment rates. Even Ada County saw a jump to 7.5 percent in 1982, compared to the pre-recession unemployment rate of 4.0 percent in 1979. During the 1990s recession, six counties fit the double-digit unemployment rate category. An additional industry affected was mobile home manufacturing, again due to high interest rates.

#### **How might Idaho fare if there is a national economic recession in the near future?**

In some respects, the Idaho industries that were most affected by the last two recessions--mining and forest-products industries--already have suffered. The natural-resource industries are depressed and have much lower employment levels. It is unlikely that the mining and forest-products industries will recover soon, regardless of national economic conditions.

In addition, most agriculture commodity prices are very low already. Overproduction and shifts in consumer preferences are the primary reasons. Increasingly, foreign countries' trade policies and product specifications are af-

fecting the ability of Idaho producers to market their products.

Population growth is slowing down statewide, but still is strong in the urban areas. Without a recession this means there will continue to be perceived and/or real labor shortages in these areas. If there is a recession in the United States or in particular areas, such as California, there might be more in-migration to Idaho. The continued population growth should support continued growth in the *Services Producing* and *Construction* industries.

Most economists are predicting a near-term slowdown in Idaho's rate of economic and employment growth, but there should still be growth. The same economists say the areas of the state that currently have economic problems will continue to have them.

Idaho does have some industries that might be vulnerable to a national recession. The electronics industry markets nationally (and globally) is inherently volatile. Downturns in customer purchases of these Idaho products would have negative impacts. Higher fuel prices probably would hurt tourism, agriculture, and food processing especially hard. Already there are reports of businesses that use service and delivery vehicles raising prices to the consumer.

The major concern about a downturn in the electronics industry is that it has become the dominant manufacturing industry in the state. The workers are highly specialized. If there are large layoffs in this industry, it is unlikely the unemployed workers would quickly find jobs requiring the same skills and offering comparable pay. This would probably mean longer unemployment insurance claim series and pressure on the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust Fund adequacy balance.

Idaho corporations with recession sensitive products and services could see their profits diminish. This would mean less taxes paid, fewer employee bonuses, and downsizing.

The emerging electricity crunch has the effect of an additional tax on businesses and consumers alike.

Continual declines in the stock market erode

consumer confidence and can affect major purchases.

The adequacy of the UI Trust Fund is closely monitored. The most recent analysis suggests the fund is adequate to meet any expected economic slowdowns within Idaho. However, the analysis also says that a repeat of a recession similar to the one in the 1980s would severely test UI Trust Fund adequacy.

#### **Will there be a national economic recession soon?**

Nationally, the economists' opinion is mixed. The sitive signs, as compared to the last two recessions, are that interest rates are low and inflation is still very low. The problem with future inflation rates is the soaring cost of energy—fuels and electricity. The CPI is now reflecting these costs and this leads to a ratcheting up of a whole host of other costs, including Social Security benefits, worker pay plans, and business and government expenditures. Interest rates are being closely managed by the Federal Reserve Board and are unlikely to rise very much. In

fact, the Federal Reserve Board recently reduced interest rates in order to stimulate business activity.

The perception of a recession can make it a reality. Consumer confidence, corporate fears of declining stock prices, and the uncertainty in the minds of those who provide investment capital and other types of credit are major factors in the recession mix. If these and other players perceive a recession is imminent, their actions could make it a reality.

The most likely scenario is that there will be a continual shakeout in the stock market, profit losses, and mega-mergers. Consumer confidence will remain positive but flat. The world economy will continue to grow or rebound. Businesses will make extra efforts to increase productivity, but this also means cutting jobs. Yet, if the national economy remains in the 4 to 5 percent unemployment rate range, job opportunities will abound.

**FYI Table 1: Idaho Unemployment Insurance Activity 1980 - 1999**

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
State - Weeks Paid	709,532	705,125	1,120,644	911,860	640,009
State - Dollars Paid	66,998,432	71,447,066	124,869,222	102,545,923	72,785,372
State - Trust Fund Paid*	88,831,235	81,126,648	26,850,066	19,545,062	55,096,831
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
State - Weeks Paid	628,176	642,146	544,991	447,750	422,365
State - Dollars Paid	75,630,019	81,157,353	69,668,427	57,286,529	55,151,708
State - Trust Fund Paid*	78,721,677	94,431,892	123,229,602	169,854,239	211,056,297
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
State - Weeks Paid	432,218	565,050	754,469	746,905	548,516
State - Dollars Paid	59,533,187	82,502,615	111,843,571	115,915,429	86,919,161
State - Trust Fund Paid*	242,620,136	242,051,342	254,684,281	279,061,261	293,701,173
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
State - Weeks Paid	579,465	571,006	523,435	538,656	529,868
State - Dollars Paid	96,025,250	98,392,846	93,377,117	100,258,445	100,523,174
State - Trust Fund Paid*	295,719,659	316,391,695	331,703,776	330,814,400	332,837,261

\* Combined Trust Fund Balance includes Reserve

Source: Idaho Dept. of Labor

FYI Table 2: IDAHO & US COMPARISON 1978 - 2000												
	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
STATE OF IDAHO												
Civilian Labor Force	414,000	431,000	429,000	428,000	444,000	458,000	462,000	466,000	473,000	473,000	479,000	489,000
Unemployment	23,000	24,000	34,000	32,000	44,000	45,000	33,000	37,000	41,000	38,000	28,000	25,000
% Unemployed	5.6	5.6	7.9	7.5	9.9	9.8	7.1	7.9	8.7	8.0	5.8	5.1
Employment	391,000	407,000	395,000	396,000	400,000	413,000	429,000	429,000	432,000	435,000	451,000	464,000
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	331,342	338,017	330,008	327,758	312,233	317,867	330,500	335,917	333,625	333,465	348,201	366,169
% Change Labor Force		4.1	-0.5	-0.2	3.7	3.2	0.9	0.9	1.5	0.0	1.3	2.1
% Change Employment		4.1	-2.9	0.3	1.0	3.2	3.9	0.0	0.7	0.7	3.7	2.9
% Change Nonfarm Payroll Jobs		2.0	-2.4	-0.7	-4.7	1.8	4.0	1.6	-0.7	0.0	4.4	5.2
UNITED STATES												
Civilian Labor Force	102,251	104,962	106,940	108,670	110,204	111,550	113,544	115,461	117,834	119,865	121,669	123,869
Unemployment	6,202	6,137	7,637	8,273	10,678	10,717	8,539	8,312	8,237	7,425	6,701	6,528
% Unemployed	6.1	5.8	7.1	7.6	9.7	9.6	7.5	7.2	7.0	6.2	5.5	5.3
Employment	96,048	98,824	99,303	100,397	99,526	100,834	105,005	107,150	109,597	112,440	114,968	117,342
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	92,661	95,477	95,938	97,030	96,125	97,450	101,685	103,971	106,434	109,232	111,800	114,142
% Change Labor Force		2.7	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.8	1.7	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.8
% Change Employment		2.9	0.5	1.1	-0.9	1.3	4.1	2.0	2.3	2.6	2.2	2.1
% Change Nonfarm Payroll Jobs		3.0	0.5	1.1	-0.9	1.4	4.3	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.1
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000*	
STATE OF IDAHO												
Civilian Labor Force	492,619	508,687	531,994	547,678	591,463	600,493	618600	632,934	653,768	655,272	670,915	
Unemployment	29,135	31,617	34,651	34,025	32,874	32,355	32,393	33,805	32,875	33,913	30,171	
% Unemployed	5.9	6.2	6.5	6.2	5.6	5.4	5.2	5.3	5.0	5.2	4.5	
Employment	463,484	477,070	497,343	513,653	558,589	568,138	586,207	599,129	620,893	621,359	640,744	
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	385,403	398,084	416,604	436,815	461,386	477,414	491,863	508,813	521,583	539,169	557,311	
% Change Labor Force	0.7	3.3	4.6	2.9	8.0	1.5	3.0	2.3	3.3	0.2	2.4	
% Change Employment	-0.1	2.9	4.2	3.3	8.7	1.7	3.2	2.2	3.6	0.1	3.1	
% Change Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	5.3	3.3	4									



# Glossary of Labor Market Terms

**Agriculture Employment:** Persons on agriculture payrolls who work or receive pay for any period during the survey week. This includes owners, operators, unpaid family members who work at least 15 hours a week, and hired laborers.

**Average Hourly Earnings/Average Weekly Hours:** The average total money earnings earned by production or non-supervisory workers for selected industries. The average number of hours worked by production or non-supervisory workers including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave. The data is collected for the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**Average Weekly Earnings:** Average Hourly Earnings multiplied by Average Weekly Hours.

**Civilian Labor Force:** A count of non-institutional persons 16 years of age and over residing within a specific geographic area, excluding members of armed forces, who are classified as employed, unemployed and seeking employment, or involved in a labor dispute.

**Consumer Price Index (CPI):** A national index measuring changes over time in the price of a fixed market basket of goods and services. There are two indexes—the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) represents the buying habits of about 80 percent of the non-institutional population of the United States, and the Urban Wage & Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents 40 percent of the population.

**Covered Employers:** Employers who are subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance laws.

**Durable Goods:** Also known as “hard goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers with a normal life expectancy of three years or more.

**Employed:** Individuals, 16 years of age or older, who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit or worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business during the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Individuals are also counted as employed if they had a job but did not work because they were: ill, on vacation, in a labor dispute, prevented from working because of bad weather, or temporarily absent for similar reasons.

**Initial Claim:** Any notice of unemployment filed to request (1) a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) a second or subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

**Labor Market Area (LMA):** An area that consists of a central city or cities and the surrounding territory within commuting distance. It is an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find

employment without changing place of residence. Idaho has nine LMAs.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** An area that has either a city with a population of at least 50,000 or a Bureau of Census urbanized area of at least 50,000 and a total metropolitan area of at least 100,000. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MSAs. There are two MSAs in Idaho—Boise City (including Ada and Canyon counties) and Pocatello City (including Bannock County).

**Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment:** Persons on non-farm establishment payrolls (including employees on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation) who work or receive pay for any part of the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. It is a count of jobs by place of work. It does not include self-employed, unpaid volunteer or family workers, domestic workers in households, military personnel and persons who are laid off, on leave without pay, or on strike for the entire reference period.

**Nondurable Goods:** Also known as “soft goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers that generally last for only a short period of time (three years or less).

**Seasonally Adjusted:** Data is seasonally adjusted to remove the impact of regular events that occur at the same time every year such as the effect of cold weather on outdoor activities, the Christmas holiday, or the summer influx of youth into the labor market.

**Unemployed:** Those individuals, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work during the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. The only exceptions to these criteria are individuals who are waiting to be recalled from a layoff and individuals waiting to report to a new job within 30 days—these, too, are considered unemployed.

**Unemployment Insurance:** Unemployment Insurance is a program for the accumulation of funds paid by employers, to be used for the payment of Unemployment Insurance to workers during periods of unemployment which are beyond their control.

**Unemployment Rate:** The number of persons unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

**Weekly Benefit Amount:** The amount payable to a claimant for a compensable week of total unemployment.

**Weeks Claimed:** The number of weeks that unemployed workers claimed Unemployment Insurance benefits.

**Weeks Compensated:** The number of weeks for which compensation was actually paid.

# IDAHO EMPLOYMENT

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